AMERICA: IMAGE AND REALITY

—Gunnar D. Kumlien

THE

Commonweal

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by Francois Houtart

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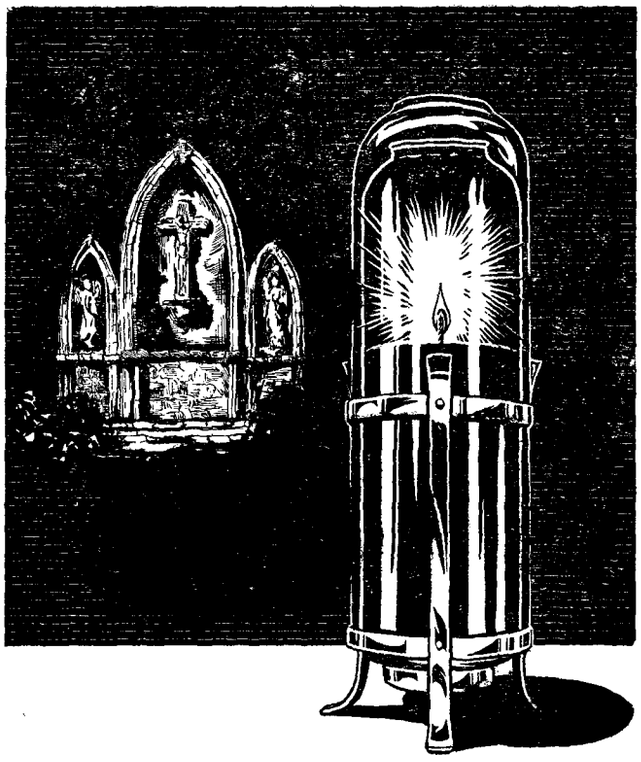

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THIS WEEK

Week by Week	447
The Specter of Starvation *by Francois Houtart*	451
Understanding the French *by George H. Tavard*	453
America: Image and Reality *by Gunnar D. Kumlien*	455
The Stage *by Richard Hayes*	457
The Screen *by Philip T. Hartung*	459
Of Note	459
Communications	461
Books	464

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The Commonweal

week by week

THE GREAT SILENCE

TWO NATIONAL figures, Secretary Dulles and General Ridgway, have recently used two popular magazines to express their views on politically controversial issues. These articles have naturally been read with great interest, for it is surely significant that the opinions of Mr. Dulles and General Ridgway regarding our willingness and ability to wage war were now being made clear to the American people for the first time, and centered on past events rather than upon present circumstances or future possibilities.

To be blunt, what is stated in each case has primarily an historical interest, and is largely irrelevant to our present crises. What is immediate and relevant is the fact that major decisions had been made and policies adopted which concerned the life of every American, and yet the American people were not even told of the decision, let alone of the crisis which confronted the nation, the issues involved, the possible alternatives of action, or the reasons which made one alternative seem more advisable than any other. The people of history's greatest democracy were the victims of a conspiracy of silence, broken only when they were powerless to express their opinion or perhaps alter the course of events. Supposedly, we had gone three times to the brink of war; at the same time our military defense has been geared to atomic power while our ground forces were dangerously reduced, but the general population did not know all this until a retired Army Chief of Staff pointed out the dangers of the military "New Look" several years after it had begun to look that way.

READING between the lines of these two articles, one can see a disturbing failure of American political leadership over recent years—an implicit conviction that the American people can be relied upon to carry out a major policy decision handed down to them from above, but they cannot be trusted with understanding that decision in its full context. Such an attitude is usually based, of course, on an official fear of taking the people into confidence, and upon an aristocratic, rather than democratic, underestimation of the people's willingness to assume responsibility and to make the sacrifices that such responsibility may demand.

As a consequence, our national thinking about foreign policy tends to become concerned almost exclusively with the past—with partisan recriminations and charges over the failures of a foreign policy that was bipartisan in origin. What nationwide debate over foreign policy have we had since the Marshall Plan discussions eight years ago? History has not stood still since then, but our foreign policy debates have. As a result, the American people are basically uninformed about our crucial foreign situations and thereby sink deeper into that political immaturity and indifference to which the conspiracy of silence forces them.

The people are told, for example, that the U.S. will fight to protect Formosa; but few Americans can really say why. They have been told that the U.S. risked war in Indochina; they have yet to be told in intelligible detail why such a risk would serve the best interests of America and the free world. In short, they have been told all—and told nothing.

An inevitable consequence of the current combination of the decline of debate before policy is adopted, and sensational oversimplifications of it after adoption, is that government spokesmen are put into the position of "selling" foreign policy rather than attempting to explain it. Mr. Dulles' recent statements in *Life* are not completely above the charge of "hucksterism" which some Democrats have leveled; unfortunately, many of the recorded reactions of these same Democrats cannot escape the charge of partisan opportunizing. Almost overlooked is the real victim of this barrage of counter-charges and partisan phrase-making—the American citizen, who knows that he is deeply involved in whatever happens anywhere on this shrinking globe and wants to face squarely, with

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intelligence and responsibility, America's role in the troubled future.

Our foreign policy must be framed to meet effectively a complex global challenge. If it is to be worthy of our national tradition, that foreign policy should be preceded, not followed, by debate, which would give to the American people solid facts and clear options, and would invite their participation in one of the momentous dialogues of history.

PRIMARIES, ANYONE?

JAMES RESTON of the New York *Times* thinks Republican orators should stop billing Mr. Eisenhower as another Washington or Lincoln; the President is no genius, says Mr. Reston, but "simply an honest man who has proved that simple goodness is still a great force in national and world politics." Mr. Reston may well be right; certainly, the most amazing thing about the Eisenhower phenomenon is the practical political success he has enjoyed.

Take, for instance, Mr. Eisenhower on whether or not his name should be used in state primaries. Ever since the President's heart attack, Senator Knowland has been pressing for an early decision on whether the President will or will not run again. What the Senator wanted, of course, was a clear yes or no, for if Mr. Eisenhower was not going to run, he wanted to get an early start in his own drive for the GOP nomination. The Senator's feelings are understandable enough, of course, although his pressure hardly endeared him to those close to Mr. Eisenhower. At the same time, the general feeling was that Senator Knowland had the White House on something of a political spot.

Then came the President's first press conference since his heart attack. The President began it with Topic A—his political intentions. He was pleased and flattered by the expressions of confidence in him from New Hampshire and elsewhere, Mr. Eisenhower said, and his name *could* be entered in state primaries. However, "freedom to select, nominate and elect a candidate to public office is basic to our American political system. Because I deeply believe that every citizen should have the widest possible choice in expressing his own preference in such matters, I would hope that the accident of my illness and the necessary period for determining the degree of my recovery would not have the effect of interfering with the privilege of every member of our party to express his preference for the Presidential candidate of his choice."

In other words, Senator Knowland and his supporters are perfectly free to enter his name in any primary they choose. But he will not be running alone or against other hopefuls of equal stature, as anticipated, but against the President himself—despite the fact that the President's mind is not yet made up on his own candidacy. Unless Mr. Eisenhower takes himself out of the race before the primary votes are cast, this almost certainly means that instead of arriving at the GOP convention with a hard core of pledged delegates, Senator Knowland will come empty-handed, fresh from a series of political fiascos in one state after another. Thus with one innocent press conference the White House seems to have killed or seriously injured Mr. Knowland's chances before he even got started. And the interesting thing is that it was all done with Senator Knowland's own gun.

NEXT WEEK

DONALD MCDONALD, of the *Catholic Messenger* of Davenport, Iowa, discusses his experiences as a columnist in the Catholic press.

"I have no personal complaints. . . . But I think there is room for a general complaint. A Catholic press is not healthy in which the applied teachings of the Holy Father must wage an uphill fight for admission, in which criticism of political immorality is not tolerated and arguments against what Pius XII recently called 'selfish nationalism' are never printed. It is downright sick when, in addition to these negatives, the Catholic reader is confronted by editors who actually take up the cudgels for Senator McCarthy, isolationism and, yes, even 'selfish nationalism,' all, of course, in the name of 'official' Catholicism."

INFLUENCE THROUGH TRADE

THE SOVIET UNION, it would seem, is poised on the threshold of a worldwide campaign to win staunch friends and lasting influence through stepped-up trade relations. It has at the outset the advantages enjoyed by a monolithic dictatorship in competition with a conglomeration of democratic governments and private firms. Over the long pull such advantages are less substantial than they at first appear. The eventualities here are obscured by the contrast between the performance of the Communist countries in meeting delivery promises up to now and Soviet Russia's remarkable degree of fulfillment of the most ambitious Five-Year plans. But as goods can be of-

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fered at a loss, if need be, official Soviet traders have the widest latitude.

The Soviet Union also has the advantage of constituting a ready market for the surplus raw materials of many of the underdeveloped (and politically uncommitted countries). This makes it much easier to mask more ultimate motives—with the added inducement that the Russian manufactured goods offered in exchange would be procured outside the dollar system. At this stage the Soviets do not require any political commitments as part of their new trade agreements; neutrality in the cold war is said to be the extent of their present objectives. In contrast, American policy tends to concentrate on economic aid to allies and to tie in technical and economic assistance with adherence to NATO, SEATO, and the like.

Perhaps our chief difficulty is that, aside from oil and certain strategic materials not available in the United States in sufficient quantities, this country has little need of the food-stuffs, fibers and minerals which many of the non-industrialized lands produce for export. We do seek more markets for our capital, tools and consumers' goods, but how are the countries in question to pay for them? Yet our need of more substantial trade relations with these countries goes far beyond the proverbial capitalist's dependence on expanding markets.

This need is fully as impelling as the Soviets' requirements of more ingredients for their industrial build-up. We should be able to compete with the Soviets for trade relations with at least equal sincerity and zest. Negatively, it is to our vital interest to arrest the further spread of dominant Soviet influence in the world; positively, it is to our economic and political interest to build up independent nuclei of prosperity and strength throughout the world. Moreover, we are far more able today to export capital, tools and skills than our relentless Soviet rival.

How can we come up with a magic formula which will put such undeniable advantages to good account? How can we bring our techniques into play in economically backward areas without exerting resented political and military pressure or setting up an unhappy relationship of beggar and lady bountiful? Assuredly this is the time to develop such a formula while the Russian trade program is still largely a matter of talk.

No doubt the most obvious single step is to play down the military aspects of our trade agreements; at the same time economic aid should be much less concentrated than it now is on our outright military allies. The program should branch out. The dollar gap, which is the seat of so many present difficulties, will not be bridged until the countries in question have attained a substantial degree of industrialization. Accordingly, we should worry less about the disposal of surpluses for which we have no use than our various means of contributing to the transformation of the underdeveloped countries. Terms should be considerate, of course, but the proportion to be assigned to expanded loans and gifts would have to be determined. The *faux pas* we have committed in our efforts to counteract Soviet influence have undoubtedly been exaggerated, but the time has come for some major changes in our policies of trade and aid.

A FILM AND ITS AUDIENCES

IN DISCUSSING the different judgments that two Catholic film-reviewing organizations have passed on a recent film, Monsignor Thomas F. Little, executive secretary of the Legion of Decency, made a statement that invites consideration.

The French-made film, "Letters From My Windmill," written, directed and produced by Marcel Pagnol was adapted from three stories by Alphonse Daudet. Of the three stories, the first concerns a priest who succumbs to gluttony and the second a brother in a poor monastery who discovers a formula for an excellent liqueur. According to a representative of the producers, 4,500 priests and nuns who attended a special screening of the film in Paris "enjoyed it immensely." The representative also showed a letter from Canon Jean Dewavrin, director of the Centrale Catholique du Cinema, whose closest American counterpart is the National Legion of Decency. The Canon wrote that the subjects were treated with "discretion" and "poetry" and that "the humor goes over easily."

But the film received a harsh greeting in America when the Legion judged that it offered "a frivolous, disrespectful and grossly comical presentation of religion and religious characters. Its exhibition in entertainment motion-picture theaters is seriously objectionable and conducive to a misunderstanding of religious practices."

The difference in opinion evidently came as a surprise to those people who are still able to think of the Church as a monolithic structure in which any Catholic group is able to pass on prudential matters with an authority and finality which automatically compels the adherence of every right-thinking Catholic. Some such assumption seems to lie behind the apparent confusion of an editorial writer for the New York *Post* who recounted the

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events and then asked, rhetorically enough, "Who has the final word?"

The answer, of course, is that in the judgments demanded by artistic works there is no "final" word. The history of art abundantly illustrates that, without destroying the grounds of criticism, judgments of particular works will be modified by time, place and circumstance. And it is precisely this that the executive secretary of the Legion of Decency insisted upon when he was asked to comment on the great disparity that existed between the judgments of the French and the American organizations. He correctly pointed out that such differences had existed before. But, he said, "there is no incongruity. The receptivity of a picture in one country might not be the same as the receptivity in another country."

Monsignor Little has well stressed one of the permanent problems in the censorship or judgment of particular works, the attempt to judge its effect upon the audience. We would insist, with him, upon this. But we would point out that this makes the problem of criticizing any particular work all the greater. For the differences which he found to exist between American and French audiences may well exist between audiences in a single country, and the judgment of the Legion does less than justice to those Americans who are not easily led to misunderstand religious practices and who could discern in this film the poetry, humor and charm that Canon Dewavrin and 4,500 French nuns and priests found there.

FREE SALK SHOTS

WE DO not know about other sections of the country, but at least one town in New Jersey has had some trouble with its free Salk anti-polio shots. Most doctors seem to have gone along with the program in which vaccine supplied free of charge is distributed through public clinics. But in Cedar Grove, N.J., a suburban community with a population of less than ten thousand, the town's four doctors have refused to participate, and the town has had to import doctors from neighboring communities to give the free shots.

The doctors who refuse to participate in the free shots do so, they say, simply as a matter of principle; the problem in a small town, as they see it, is not the same as in a city, because they know who can afford to pay and who cannot, and they would see that children whose families could not afford the shots got them anyway.

The position of the reluctant doctors may seem quite logical to them, but we think they are making a serious mistake. The general feeling about the Salk discovery was that this was a national achievement, financed by years of popular contributions to the March of Dimes. Under the circumstances, even people who believe wholeheartedly in private enterprise are not going to take kindly to a refusal by doctors to participate in the free clinics, in New Jersey or anywhere else. Logic or no, the public feeling about the fight against polio is such that most people will regard refusal to participate in free clinics as very much like checking an accident victim's bank account before giving him treatment.

A few years ago, when public health insurance was being discussed, the AMA spent thousands of dollars for a highly successful public relations campaign against what was called "socialized medicine." So far, the isolated boycott of the Salk clinics in New Jersey does not seem to be spreading. If it were to do so, the AMA would not be able to find enough public relations firms to undo the certain popular reaction.

WATCHING THE WATCHDOG

WE ARE glad that President Eisenhower recently appointed an eight-man board of prominent citizens to review, every six months, the functioning of the Central Intelligence Agency, often called America's watchdog.

Since World War II the U.S. has been surprised too often by the technological advances of the Soviet. Russia had the atom bomb three years before it was expected to, and again tore up our timetable of predictions by producing the hydrogen bomb and mass-produced intercontinental bombers to carry it several years before the U.S. had anticipated. At the present time Russia may well be closer to the grim secret of the intercontinental ballistic missile than we are.

In view of past under-rating of Soviet scientific ability and our own consequent complacency, we hope that the new commission will help to keep the intelligence agencies of the U.S. at peak efficiency. And we are grateful that such an important commission will serve as an arm of the Administration rather than be a joint Congressional committee, as has been often proposed by members of Congress who are anxious to oversee the workings of C.I.A. Congressional "leaks" might well hinder C.I.A.'s undercover activities, and heads of Congressional committees too often seem tempted to make political hay while the spotlight shines. We are glad that the secret activities of the C.I.A. have been kept out of their hands.

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The Specter of Starvation

"THE NUMBER ONE PROBLEM TODAY IS HOW TO FEED THE WORLD'S PEOPLE"

FRANCOIS HOUTART

WITH LITTLE fear that the facts will prove me wrong, I venture the prediction that a few decades from now world population will be the greatest of all human problems. It is true that when the experts attempt to project the development of world population wide variations in the figures result. According to high estimates, for example, the world will number 3,990,000,000 people by 1980—an increase of a billion and a half in thirty years. According to low estimates, the increase will be 841,000,000—which would bring the total to 3,295,000,000 people. But either set of figures is impressive enough.

One hundred years from now, it is estimated, the world's population will be six billion. According to the average estimates, the underdeveloped areas of the world will register the greatest population increase. Asia alone will increase by about a billion people in thirty years; Latin America will more than double its present population.

In order to be able to supply the food which will be required for this growing population, there will have to be a proportional increase in man's means of subsistence. During the last fifteen years this increase in production has not been achieved. Indeed, the situation is even deteriorating. Agricultural production per head in such countries as Japan, Burma, the Indies and Ceylon, among others, is lower than it was before World War II. The number one problem today—and one which will be even more acute tomorrow—is how to feed the world's people.

When the impact of this problem on the life of men is examined more closely, the result is a frightening one. Today, two-thirds of the world's population is undernourished—a fact which has been stated often but is worth repeating. And it should also be noted that the situation is getting worse instead of better; three decades ago the hungry numbered half the people in the world—bad enough, certainly, but better than the present.

The only way the world's food problem can be solved is by a carefully planned series of closely coordinated measures in which social and cultural factors, as well as technical and economic considerations, must be taken into account. The pressure of population on food supply has a number of causes. Right now, the most striking is the reduction of the death rate due to rapid medical progress, as reflected in the reduction of infant mortality and an increase in longevity.

This is a phenomenon which is occurring most obviously in the underdeveloped countries. In such countries the death rate goes down, but the birth rate remains stationary for quite a long time. According to the usual pattern, a very high degree of fertility continues for a period, falling little by little as industrialization takes place and people become urbanized. High fertility combined with a lowering of the death rate and large numbers of young people in the total population structure results in a very sharp population increase. That is why the sharp up-turn of the population curve in the underdeveloped countries is so pronounced.

IF PROGRESS in medicine and hygiene is to be truly efficacious, it must be accompanied by progress in other domains—preeminently in that of agricultural production. It is a mistake to over-estimate the possibilities of producing more food by means of cultivating more land. Most of the underdeveloped countries, particularly in Asia, have only a very small reserve of arable land. Moreover, much of the land not yet used for agriculture is not tillable either because of the soil structure or the climate. Generally speaking, such land cannot be put into production until after a major technical preparation of the soil.

We cannot be too optimistic, either, about stepping up production of foodstuffs through technical and economic improvements since here one runs into certain vicious circles. Lack of productivity results in part from the undernourishment of the farm workers; lower productivity in turn ensures that these workers do not have sufficient nourishment. A program of modernization would include control of animal and vegetable diseases, a more rational cultivation of the

Abbé Houtart, secretary to Cardinal Van Roey of Malines, Belgium, has traveled extensively in underdeveloped countries.

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best stocks, mechanization, improvement of the soil, and the like. But these measures in turn depend upon a whole series of financial and economic steps. Indeed, they cannot be brought about without special efforts to organize credit facilities, agrarian reforms, efficient means of marketing, reserve stocks and new means of communication and transport. The whole economy, in other words, has to undergo a complete transformation. When a population increases at the rate of one per cent a year, provision of approximately six per cent of a nation's revenue has to be made for these constructive purposes if its standard of living is to be maintained. If the increase of expenditures for this purpose is not proportionately higher than the increase in the population, living standards are certain to go down. Unhappily, this is the situation in most of the underdeveloped countries.

As these lands in question are clearly incapable, both economically and technically, of resolving their problems unaided, the only solution is large-scale economic and technical assistance from the industrialized countries. If the problem is to be solved, these latter will have to set aside a substantial proportion of their annual revenues and invest it in a disinterested fashion in the underdeveloped countries.

Up to now, economic and, often, military conditions have been attached to foreign investments that make them psychologically difficult for the underdeveloped countries to accept, even though they are in great need of capital from outside. Moreover, these investments are far from being large enough. Their total, although the figure may seem impressive, is actually only a small fraction of the various countries' military budget. The only solution I can see is the setting up of an international fund. But unfortunately such aid may even now arrive too late.

THAT IS the problem as it confronts the Christian conscience. And it is a matter of conscience, for the problem of population is not only technical, economic or social; it is also theological and moral.

One of the questions that Christians will be called upon to answer goes like this: how can Divine Providence permit the development of population unless man is able to muster the means of sufficient nourishment for all the people in the world? That is a fundamental question, leading straight to the problems of the existence of God and His governance of the world. Certainly this question has already been posed many times under different circumstances, but for very many people it is in the near future going to be raised in a more urgent fashion than ever. Christians must realize how important it is to face this problem of the world's anguish. We believe in Providence, but we must also be able to supply an answer which is acceptable to our fellow men, particularly those who are among the victims of conditions brought on by population growth.

A work of Christian reflection must be undertaken. I would suggest two courses, simply indicating them in rough outline. To begin with, who would say that means will not be found by men to resolve the problems of subsistence as economic and social pressures make themselves more and more felt? Already certain achievements supply some hope: the potential involved in peaceful use of atomic energy is one of them. Another element in the answer lies in the accent to be placed on human responsibility in all these problems. Indeed, if the economic organization of the world were based on justice, a more equitable distribution of its goods would prevail. We would not then be confronted by regions which are as differentiated in economic development as they now are, when the contrast between the wealth of some regions and the poverty of others is so great. Furthermore, human

irresponsibility has wasted natural resources to an incalculable degree. Entire regions have been reduced to deserts by bad use of the soil stemming from the desire for immediate profit. The well-being of future generations has too often been sacrificed to immediate private gain. The political and military history of the world supplies plenty of examples of the way men destroy natural resources. It hardly seems fair to blame the results on God. Perhaps in the future the urgency of the population problem will actually work to bring peoples closer to a wise course in the matter of armaments, politics and economy.

What confronts the Christian conscience right now is the question of justice and charity on the international level. In the nineteenth century the social problem revolved around the distribution of wealth among social classes. Today it extends to the relationship between rich and poor countries, and again and again in recent messages Pope Pius has emphasized the principles of international justice and charity. Obviously, the task confronting the world requires organization and planning. It is in this domain that Christian charity will have to operate, and what is needed is an entirely new perspective, and one for which, sadly enough, we are probably ill prepared. Yet there is no evading the problem, and Christians should lead all others in proposing and supporting adequate solutions.

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Understanding the French

GEORGE H. TAVARD

OF ALL Western nations, the French Republic seems to be the one that the average American finds most hard to understand. In politics he is bewildered by swift changes of government that leave Frenchmen unconcerned and the life of their nation undisturbed. Tending to see things in black and white when they are really multicolored, he is nonplussed when a project like EDC, that had come out of a French mind, is rejected by a French Parliament. He is equally puzzled by colonial policies that are neither for nor against anybody, but simply try to keep the balance between the many interests involved. And questions come to his mind: what is wrong with them? Why can't they learn to run their country like a good business?

Religion in France may also astonish him. His paper reports that French Catholicism is in the worst possible condition; that the working-class has been lost; that the Communists are triumphant; that experiments that were weird in the first place, like priest-workers—what can a priest-worker be? I have met the good lady who believed they simply were priests who took a job to get more money than their Bishop paid them!—have now fizzled out. Yet if our mythical American has some culture, he knows that France is still now one of the great missionary nations; that Catholics are active in government, in Parliament, in the unions; that the strongest single influence in the state universities is that of Catholic intellectuals; that on the Catholic American market an amazing proportion of books are translated from the French. What does it all mean?

It means of course, in the first place, that it is hardly possible for one who has not been reared in it to acquire the feel of the peculiar mixture of classicism and revolutionary dreams that has formed the modern French mind. The vitality of a people is marked by the way it weathers the crises of its history. As one may make a retreat in order to strengthen one's faith, the French temper provokes crises in order to test its mettle. The revolutionary side of the French mind loves danger; and the classical side studies the crisis as it goes by and passes away. It then continues undisturbed till the revolutionary side goes on another spree. The political result is notorious. In a colorful phrase, *le char de l'Etat navigue sur un volcan* ("the carriage of the State floats on a volcano"); or, in the age-old motto of the city of Paris, *fluctuat nec mergitur* ("she is shaken by the waves and does not sink"). This is not new. There was a remarkable continuity in the French nineteenth century. Yet France went through a good number of revolutions and "coups d'Etat" in those years. As the French would say: "The more it changes, the more it is the same."

The religious aspects of this duality of the French mind are no less remarkable. French Catholicism has its very conservative side, steadfast and quiet. Nothing is more symbolic of this than a small village where I spent a good many summers in my childhood. Every Sunday the whole population walked a mile and a half to go to Mass in the next village. The children and women took the same walk again for Vespers in the afternoon. This had been done ever since the village came to be—a few centuries ago.

In another domain, the best known name among conservative theologians now is that of a Frenchman. Certainly Father Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., would not like to be called anything other than conservative. Yet French Catholicism also provides the Church's testing ground for new forms of life and new currents of ideas. It puts more imagination at the service of faith than is done anywhere else. The French religious soul is at its best in this conjunction of the old and the new. It has thus joined elements that would be opposed elsewhere. And though the total harmony is at times disturbed, this union of opposites has formed a very responsible and articulate Catholic elite.

ONE OF the points that escape most American commentators is the close relationship that exists between political and religious events in France. Because they do not see this, they misrepresent many things.

For instance, "the French Church has lost the working class" has become a warning of what must not happen elsewhere; it condemns a bad example that should be avoided. Yet if the matter were seriously studied, it would be obvious that the French Church has not lost the working class, simply because the working class, as a class, was never Christian. A study of the movements of population that brought people

Father George H. Tavard, A.A., author of the recently published *The Catholic Approach to Protestantism*, is himself a native of France.

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to cities during the industrial revolution at the beginning of the last century would show that most of those who moved to the cities and formed the urban proletariat came from rural areas where the clergy had been wiped out, first, by the Wars of Religion of the seventeenth century, and secondly, by the Great Revolution of 1789. They had already been dechristianized by the circumstances.

As a matter of fact, estimates of religious practice at the end of the eighteenth century certainly look less optimistic than present-day statistics. And it is equally inaccurate to maintain that the French clergy of the last century was not aware of social problems. For when the unfortunate Father Lamennais, early in the last century, attempted to reconcile the Catholic mind and the Great Revolution, he awakened French Catholics to the precise form of social consciousness that was needed in post-revolutionary France. The latest outcome of this may be found in the remarkable "Social Directory" issued to the clergy by the French hierarchy in April, 1954.

The widespread idea that anti-clericalism is popular in France does not fit the facts either. Anti-clericalism was a powerful political slogan before World War I. The war, in which anti-clericals and priests were trapped together in the same trenches, reversed the trend. World War II sounded the death-knoll of anti-clericalism. Neither the excited Finaly affair nor the half-hearted campaign for city grants to private schools has been able to re-awaken it.

The sensitivity of the French temper to the religious implications of national events is to be kept in mind when we look at the present religious and political situation. First of all, the nature of the Fourth Republic makes it unlike any of the preceding regimes. The Fourth Republic was born of the Resistance. All its leading politicians were active in the underground movements during the German occupation. The political alliances now existing were inaugurated for the most part at that time. They have brought to politics something of the uncertainties of existence of the war years, when they were constantly threatened by enemy police and by allied bombings. Five years of fighting and plotting, of make-shift maneuvers, of alternating between despair and hope were bound to leave deeper marks on French sensibility than on, let us say, Dutch sensibility.

The same remark applies to the religious situation. The political circumstances of the war had clearly religious implications. The Resistance had religious aspects and forms. The younger clergy of today were formed by it, as they experienced it or dreamt it, much more than by the rule of the Seminary. It provided a constant, unforgettable background to their studies and meditations. It should not be surprising, therefore, that post-war Catholicism in France would tend to emphasize dissatisfaction and restlessness, which were the daily bread of those formative years. This can help us understand the immediate popularity of the present liturgical reforms. Every removal of outdated elements is highly welcome. This also throws light on the radical nature of French apostolic experiments; on the success of theologians who really have something to say and do not merely repeat what others have previously written; on the laity who, claiming their own responsibilities in Catholic Action, receive the aim from the Church but devise the methods themselves; on the recurrent insistence that, in the words of the "Week of Catholic Intellectuals" of November, 1955, "the Church is not clerical."

The same reference to the war years holds the key to many events in international politics. Neither EDC nor a rearmed Germany can be popular. The French never refer to a "Nazi" occupation: the occupation they knew was, simply, German. On top of that, one can hardly expect graduates of *Sciences po.* (the "School of Political Sciences" in Paris) to underwrite a common policy with other nations before that common policy is defined in positive terms. Here the revolutionary and the classical side of the French mind converge to the same conclusion. The idea of a united Europe has come up time and again in French history. It has lost none of its appeal. But European nations are acutely aware of their past. And just as one cannot assume that the English will forget the British Commonwealth in order to form a united Europe, one cannot ask the French to forget five years of their recent history—the most significant of the last half-century. It is not the goal that is in question, but the means.

FRANCE is still one of the few remaining nations with colonial responsibilities. It is probably the most maligned. The same trends that helped make her Catholicism missionary-minded, made her patriotism colonial-minded. The *mission civilisatrice de la France* is a devalued, secularized counterpart of the Christian missionary spirit. This gave rise to the concept of "integration" as a colonial policy. The same concept was applied by Spain in her conquest of Latin America; and it is still applied by Portugal in her overseas possessions. "Integration" is proper to the colonial policies of nations formed in a Catholic tradition. The French colonial administration, however, did not carry it out as systematically as the Portuguese, for instance, did. As conceived by the French, the ideal of "integration" has had its days of greatness. It entrusted French Equatorial Africa to a Negro, Felix Eboué, who became its greatest Governor General. (Thanks to him, this large territory switched to the Allies in 1940.) It has given the French territories, including North

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Africa, its political and intellectual elite. And it has not yet been stubborn enough to fail to come to terms with reality once "integration" became impossible. The five French territories in India have been handed over to India without undue fuss; Laos and Cambodia have been granted autonomy; Syria and the Lebanon are now independent Republics; the new "internal autonomy" of Tunisia is the outcome of mutual agreement; the Morrocan problem is on the way to a similar solution. There is no reason to think that Algeria (where the question is, however, infinitely less simple than American journalists seem to realize) will not soon see adjustments made in a realistic way.

It is a great pity that most American tourists limit their stay in France to Paris and the Riviera. Paris is the seat of parliament and of government, and, what is more important, the cultural center of the country. But it is not France anymore than New York is the United States. The French Republic is often painted as being "doctrinaire" and centralized to an extreme. Yet the provinces have kept and developed their independent traditions. These traditions have wide variations; they range from different customary diets to flourishing local literatures. The ultimate greatness of the country lies in this essential pluralism, in the peaceful dwelling together of sharply distinguished and provincial tempers with their individual contributions to the life of the whole. Thus Gaelic, Basque, Provençal, Italian, German and Flemish are the mother-tongues of a sizable number of Frenchmen.

There are like variations in religion. The simple prayer "Our Father" is said in a different form north and south of the Loire river. The two dioceses of Metz and Strasbourg have a concordat with the Republic, while separation is the rule everywhere else. But the meaning and practice of "separation of Church and State" are notably different from what they are in America. The name of God, for instance, is officially ignored; yet not so long ago Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu, a Discalced Carmelite, could be Governor General of Indochina. And the same Carmelite, as First "Companion of the Liberation," ranks second in the protocol of the French Republic, coming between the President and the Prime Minister.

Such a variety in unity is a legacy of the Old Regime of the Monarchy. It still underlies the life of the Republic. For it is naturally reflected in government. Government by a coalition of minorities would be a good formula for it. It happens to be also a good formulation for a democratic ideal at a time when the distance is diminishing between majority rule and the police state.

Only by keeping these contrasts in mind is it possible to follow the intricacies of French internal or foreign policy. In a world where power-politics prevails, where monolithic blocks are favored, where the distinction between the aim and the means tends to vanish, the example of the French is a reminder that politics is neither a mathematical game nor a business gamble, but an art where the human element should dominate.

A EUROPEAN VIEW

America: Image and Reality

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN

IT IS usually difficult to remember, once you have seen a place, what your previous idea of it had been. The reality replaces completely the concept you had of it. Your first impressions are, therefore, a series of anticlimaxes and surprises. There are things which you expected to be much more impressive than they really are, and there are things which you expected to be ordinary, but which impress you very much. This need of revaluation strikes the average European as soon as he lands in America for the first time.

Mr. Kumlien, The Commonweal's correspondent in Rome, recently completed a series of lectures in the United States.

First of all, he has to realize that his ideas of American geography are rather confused. It can safely be said that the average European knows even less about American geography than the average American knows about Europe. The European doesn't realize the great distances between well-known American places, for example; then he realizes that there are places in Florida he has always thought of as being in California, or *vice versa*. He realizes, generally speaking, that there are many places in America, with names perfectly familiar to him, which he somehow has never thought of placing in a definite spot.

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My first impressions of the skyscrapers in New York were a definite anti-climax. Like the pyramids and the Sphinx in Egypt they are over-publicized and take fantastic proportions in the minds of people who have not seen them. My first impressions of both are identical: "Not bigger than that!" But soon I was caught by the special fascination of New York, that strange city with its Mediterranean faces and its cold, efficient, Nordic soul. In no other city do the human types more remind one of Naples, Tel Aviv or Cairo. But these Mediterranean faces are without the warm, sensitive and passionate Mediterranean soul. The predominantly dark faces are, as it were, a disguise, for the soul behind them reminds one of London and Berlin. The soul of New York is cold and indifferent, and brutally efficient, like the soul of Northern Europe. Cities like Rome or Paris or Vienna somehow seem to return one's love, but New York does not. And yet it seems to me, paradoxically, eminently lovable and sometimes painfully beautiful, like a dazzling but aloof woman.

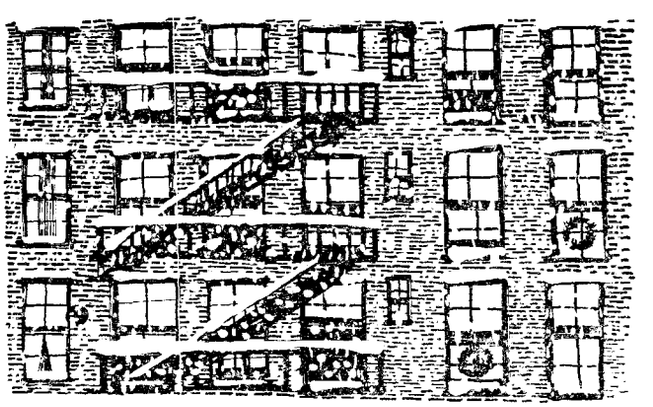
There is no other city in the world where one can feel more delightfully and absolutely alone than in New York, for in no other city are people more indifferent toward each other. In other great cities in the world there are people who are at least interested in other people's wallets, or curious about each other for various reasons. Not so in New York, where the inhabitants not only ignore each other, but seem to look through each other, which is still a step farther in the gradations of indifference. If somebody ignores you, he is still somehow aware of you, and you have at least a negative importance. But if he looks straight through you, as though you were invisible, you eventually begin to wonder if you really still cast a shadow.

AMERICAN women are particularly conspicuous to the European observer. They strike him first as being generally better groomed and better dressed than their European sisters, even if they rarely show individual and critical taste. Then they strike him as being more sure of themselves than are the women of any other nation, even those of Northern Europe. There seems to be little hesitation and shyness, even in a very young American girl. American women, to the European, may even seem "tough," not in the sense that they are vulgar in any way, but in the sense that they are both resilient and forthright. These are qualities which the European is accustomed to find only among men.

There is something which is immediately most refreshing in America and that is the general open friendliness, which has nothing to do with the indifference of the New Yorker. This friendliness is all the more refreshing in that it seems to spring from an absence of those traditions which in many European countries actually paralyze and poison intellectual life. In fact, the dangers seem to be greater the more glorious these traditions are. This may sound like heresy in the ears of many Americans, who usually admire traditions so much. But these traditions too easily become a substitute for action and attempts at improvement, even when they do not actually turn into conceit and intolerance, as happens so often within decayed aristocratic families which try to find compensation in their past achievements, or as happens to undistinguished sons of famous fathers. The very absence of traditions is, in my view, one of the secrets of the friendly freshness in the American approach, of its boldness and its faith and, in the end, of its humility, which is the first prerequisite for greatness.

BEFORE I arrived in the United States, I had heard and read many criticisms of it, expressed by intelligent and seemingly qualified European observers. When I arrived I had all of these criticisms in mind and was determined not to be taken in. I had heard about American superficiality, materialism, lack of refinement, hypocrisy and intolerance. I knew all about America's political shortcomings, her blind faith in progress and her worship of the "golden calf." I could even cite chapter and verse for each American failing: the Kinsey report, McCarthyism, shaggy-dog stories, the exploitation of the Negro and the incredibly spoiled American children. My attitude was not anti-American, but all these things were at the back of my mind, exactly as they are, I suppose, at the back of the mind of almost any European who has never been in the United States.

After two months in America all of these criticisms have undergone a strange evolution. Some of them have crumbled, leaving no traces, as they have proved to be not only untrue, but so silly that I wonder how they could ever have come into existence. Others, for instance those regarding American hypocrisy, appear to me as partly true. There is in America a marked reluctance to call a spade a spade and it takes some time for a visiting European to realize exactly when he,



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too, is not supposed to call a spade a spade, but to call it something "less controversial." At the same time, however, it is not difficult to realize that the reluctance is dictated less by hypocrisy than by the necessity of making tolerable the coexistence of so many different races and creeds, some of which are exceedingly sensitive. The layers of "hypocrisy" covering certain burning questions in America, such as the race question, are like bandages covering an open wound. It is true that the bandages conceal the wound, but they are, nevertheless, necessary. Other layers of hypocrisy remind one of the bandages covering a skin graft which is about to take and which has to be treated with caution.

THERE are several other criticisms which seem to be true or partly true—for instance, those regarding American materialism, naive faith in progress and the "golden calf." But these are equally true for Western Europeans. The only difference is that the Americans are both more consistent and efficient. If Europeans have not reached the same point, it is not from virtue, but from lack of organization. They dream of American achievement and are struggling to reach the same point as soon as possible. Much European criticism seems born of envy or the psychological need to compensate for the feeling of inferiority which everybody has who receives assistance from another.

Even so intelligent and objective a criticism of America as that of the Swiss writer, Robert Jungk, is different if read before or after a visit to the United States. He says that Americans are so bold and ambitious that they "reach for the throne of God"; that American imperialism expresses itself, not in land-grabbing and territorial expansion as did British imperialism, but in the conquest of space and in the modification of nature itself. Before a visit to America all this seems rather disquieting; after a visit, it seems a bit farfetched and overdramatized.

There is only one thing about the United States which leaves the visitor with a vague sense of concern for the future, particularly in comparison to Europe. This is the general unparalleled boom, which gives the impression of a powerful machine launched at supersonic speed on a perfectly level desert track. The attention of the crew seems to be concentrated only on the engine, in order to prevent any decrease in speed such as happened during the depression in the thirties. The members of the crew seem sure that it will not happen again. They foresee that the speed will only increase, or at least remain constant. But nobody seems to care much about *where* the machine goes at such speed or even about the fact that perfectly level desert tracks usually have an end. It all seems too perfect to last very long.

THE STAGE

NORTH AND SOUTH

THE Circle in the Square has revived "Cradle Song," the tenderly austere drama of conventual life by the Spanish playwright Martinez Sierra, in a production wholly characteristic of this most sharply individual of our minority theaters. And while a genuine pleasure must be recorded at having the play again made freshly accessible (even in the frowsy Garrett Underhill translation), I cannot with truth account myself a partisan of the very specialized kind of theatrical activity in which the ensemble at Sheridan Square so consciously engages. Mr. Jose Quintero, the shaping spirit of this organization, very decidedly puts his private seal on productions at the Circle, and all things considered, the exercise of such an authority and control would ordinarily be a welcome thing. Mr. Quintero's sensibility to the chiaroscuro—the checkered light and shade—of the psychological is expert and uncommon; one cannot soon forget how cleanly he exposed and highlighted the fantastic structure of interior reality in Miss Jane Bowles' remarkable "In the Summer House."

Yet Mr. Quintero has come lately and variously to grief in attempting the diverse styles which his recent productions at the Circle in the Square have insistently demanded. His rendition of Schnitzler's "La Ronde," for instance, was cheeky and insolent, impoverished, raw; it quite washed out of the text that stain of irony and punishing self-disgust which alone redeems this work from pornography. So too with "The King and the Duke," a most lamentable musical excursion —sweaty and infinitely dispiriting—into ersatz American folklore, notable chiefly for the athletic excesses to which it remorselessly subjected its audiences (the Circle in the Square, as one might gather, employs the arena method of staging).

"Cradle Song" permits no scope to Mr. Quintero's mastery of the intricacies of psychological feeling, and so the kind of life he has imposed upon it is to a certain degree alien to its natural rhythm. One major effect of this is a disagreeable flavor of grand pretense which intermittently afflicts the play, and there were, indeed, moments when I feared that Mr. Quintero might be seeking to curdle this fluent, translucent stream of Mediterranean passion into a turgidly contemporary study of sexual frustration colored by religious obsession. Happily, however, the drama's substance reaffirms itself, and we are carried forward serenely, whatever the obstacles. It must be noted, rather sadly, that these somewhat too often include the players. There is, at Circle in the Square, an overwhelming impression of what Mr. Stark Young

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has called, most succinctly, female-actress-egotism. This is chiefly evident in the "new dramatic sensibility" —spontaneous, free, consciously lyrical—which Mr. Quintero's best actresses so diligently seek to discover in themselves. One must, of course, welcome any new form or shape of theatrical personality, but this is at most a limited one—highly individual—and what I take to be Mr. Quintero's positive effort to establish it as a new style of accepted currency is alarming. In so rigid a scheme, natural feeling and precision of craft are the first victims, and players of a less strongly marked private individuality will decline rapidly into a slushy, assertive and distended emotional vulgarity.

Yet when one has taken exception to the unequal placing of stress and emphasis in its production, there remains nonetheless, in this "Cradle Song," a constant beauty of spirit—nobility—which nothing can diminish. I am aware of the dullness of mind and diffuseness, which Mr. Eric Bentley, for one, finds in the play: nor am I myself, by temperament, sympathetic to certain of the particular usages of religious life which it somewhat excessively presents. But these irritants assume their proper proportions when seen against the background of Latin passion and personality which is the play's very climate. The motifs of "Cradle Song" are large and deep—vocation, maternity, renunciation—yet their rhetoric is anchored surely in a rhythm felt always in the blood, and felt along the heart. The frames, as it were, are bold, and the coloring lucid, yet nonetheless soft, luminous, dense with life; the play's gathering and quite remarkable power issues from a constant gentle stress set up between the external severity of the conventual life these women have chosen, and their inward dilations of spirit. In an ideal performance, everything would conspire to enforce this delicate tension; the flux of discipline and freedom, of passion and form, age and youth; the claims of personality and tradition; the very texture of light and air, the movement, even, of the heavy religious robes—and binding all this into unity, the fluent, liquid element of the young girl, with her given natural grace of spirit, for which the others must strive, and labor to earn. Some of this is suggested at the Circle in the Square, but even in an insufficient production one may discern the uniqueness and power of the Mediterranean line in art: its peculiar sweet gravity and contemplative fullness of being; beyond all, so curious a quality of rest and harmony—stasis almost: acquiescence in the divine antinomies of nature which constitute the necessary tangle of life.

MR. ANDREW ROSENTHAL's drama "Third Person" (*at the President*) is a crystal flower of the Ibsenite north, as passionately concerned, for all its quiet absence of emphasis, with decision and act, as "Cradle Song" is, in its sensuous immediacy, with being. Against a background of urban, nervous, contemporary life, Mr. Rosenthal has composed a reticent study of—homosexuality? I suggest some hesitancy because the theme itself, though clinging pervasively to the contours of the play, is not solidified and brought into focus until the very last, and then, one cannot but feel, extinguished in the glibness of rather hastily summoned and superficially rendered psychological clichés. What is genuine and accomplished in "Third Person" is the tangible reality of its social atmosphere: Mr. Rosenthal most expertly conveys that subtle blend of intimacy and malice—catfooted, precarious, knowing—which is such a feature of highly bred, sophisticated societies. He is less secure in the delineation of personal relationships: he charts their shifting weathers, but not their force nor shape nor pattern. And personal relationships are the very substance of the dramatic tradition in which Mr. Rosenthal is working: they must be explored with a total audacity and penetration. The characters in "Third Person," on the contrary, are clothed in a fatal ambiguity: their complex density is that of life, not art: one is forced to ask of them questions which no proper work of the imagination should make necessary.

Of the human crisis in which they are implicated, I shall repeat again what I have said before: homosexuality, either as dramatic subject or private situation or social phenomenon, is not to be regarded separately from the general conditions of life: it is, should one wish to use the dreadful word, symptomatic —illustrative. We are concerned here with the first possibility, and so may say with authority that, if used merely as a piece of local color, or the occasion of a specialized *frisson*, the homosexual motif cannot seriously engage the interest. If, on the contrary, it should provide the single moral weight of a play, that play must be, of necessity, a great one. Mr. Julian Green's "South," of which we have heard much, may be this remarkable prize: "Third Person," quite honorably, is not. Mr. Rosenthal has nowhere violated taste or propriety—I am, indeed, amused at the prospect of anyone attending "Third Person" in search of the sexually piquant—but neither has he sounded his central situation at a resonant depth, or with a requisite terror and grief.

The production of "Third Person" is meticulous and absorbing in every way, with two performances of exceptional astringency and style being given by Mr. Murray Matheson and Miss Renee Gadd. Mr. Bradford Dillman plays the young man in question with charm and discretion, and an admirable exactness of contemporary tone.

RICHARD HAYES.

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THE SCREEN

HOW TO LAUNCH 1,000 SHIPS

AFTER having seen "Tiger at the Gates," the modern French play that portrays Helen as a luscious dumb bunny and Hector as a wise Trojan trying desperately to prevent the war with Greece, I find it rather hard to take the new movie version of "Helen of Troy" seriously. Although based somewhat vaguely on the *Iliad* and later writings, the film tells the story from the Trojan point of view; and it goes out of its way to build up a sympathetic case for Paris and Helen. Paris (Jack Sernas), the handsome idealistic son of the King (Cedric Hardwicke) of prosperous Troy, goes to Sparta to convince the Greeks of the futility of war. He and Helen (beautiful Rossana Podesta) are attracted to each other at once. And when her jealous husband, King Menelaus (played as a bully and boor by Niall MacGinnis), threatens to have Paris tortured, Queen Helen aids his escape; and Paris, in turn, rescues Helen from her husband by taking her with him back to Troy.

This is indeed no simple tale of runaway lovers, although the Trojans take a mighty dim view of Helen when she is safely tucked within their strong walls, and the Greek Kings, itching for an excuse to attack Troy, unite at once, launch a thousand ships and start the seige that continues for years with deadly loss to both sides. Most of the human characters from the Greek epic get into the act: foreboding Cassandra, wily Ulysses (Torin Thatcher), bossy Agamemnon (Robert Douglas), Paris' wise and patient brother Hector (Harry Andrews) who goes out to duel Achilles (Stanley Baker) when the temperamental Greek warrior finally stops sulking. But more exciting than the film's personal stories are the magnificent mob scenes: the stunning shots of preparations for war, armies advancing across the enormous CinemaScope screen, the Greeks swarming over Troy after they crawl out of the famous horse, and the sacking of the city. Robert Wise, who directed this picture in Italy, may not have got performances of much depth out of his international cast, but his people certainly look good, and so do the costumes and sets in WarnerColor. Although it has little of the biting satire of "Tiger at the Gates," the spectacular "Helen of Troy" does get over its point, even before Helen's return to Menelaus, about the dreadful loss and empty struggle of war.

ADVANCING through the centuries to the sixteenth, we come to Diane de Poitiers who, as the mistress of King Henri II, had quite an influence in the French Court. It is said that Christopher Isherwood wrote the literate script for "Diane" with the hope that Greta Garbo would play the role. Lana Turner plays it, not with great depth but with considerable beauty; and her soft blondness shows up to advantage in Eastman Color in contrast to the stunning black costumes she wears through most of the film (because she's always in mourning for someone) and also in contrast to dark-haired and striking Marisa Pavan who plays Henri's badly-treated wife, Catherine de Medici. It is King Francis I (Pedro Armendariz), quite struck with Diane's good looks and political astuteness, who persuades her to make a gentleman out of unpolished Henri when he is still prince, so he will be acceptable to the Medici family. Diane teaches the young prince (Roger Moore) not only manners and fencing but also quite a bit about love, and her enthusiasm for the job makes her continue it even after he and Catherine are married—much to the annoyance of the Italian bride who happens to be in love with her husband. When Henri becomes king, after the death of Francis and the murder of the Dauphin, Diane by no means relinquishes her position. But with Henri's death, Catherine has her big day. Well primed with political intrigue, and surprisingly frank in portraying the king-mistress relationship, "Diane" is no more inaccurate than most historical films; and it is far more entertaining.

IN modern costumes and settings, Jane Wyman suffers more than usual in a treacly soap opera called "All That Heaven Allows." She plays a middle-aged widow in a small New England town who has quite a time with her son and daughter and gossipy neighbors when she becomes attracted to a young landscape gardner (Rock Hudson) who invites her over to see his trees. Foolishly she listens to her stuffy children and nasty associates instead of her heart; and it isn't until reels later that she learns 1) money and position aren't the important things, 2) you have to be true to yourself and make your own decisions, and 3) happiness comes from within.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

OF NOTE

WORSHIP AND THE ARTS

THE DECEMBER issue of *Architectural Record* (119 W. 40th St., New York City) contains a discussion of ecclesiastical architecture by Otto Spaeth, a founder and past president of the Liturgical Arts Society. Excerpts from this discussion follow:

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It seems to me that the first requirement of a church or temple today is that it be of today, contemporary, a structure embracing the total life of the parishioner. That parishioner drives a streamlined car to work in an office or factory where everything has been designed for maximum efficiency and comfort. He travels in streamlined trains and jet-propelled planes. Yet every Sunday he is asked to hurl himself back centuries to say his prayers in the pious gloom of a Gothic or Romanesque past. The clear implication is that God does not exist today; He is made out to be a senile old gentleman dwelling among the antiques of his residence, one whom we visit each week out of sentiment and then forget since he obviously has no relation to the normal part of our lives.

God says, "I Am Who Am." This unique use of the present tense abolishes tense itself and sharply rebukes the attempt to imprison God in a granite cell, however lovely the prison windows.

If our work today is to herald a new age in church building, the first step has to be an open-minded and modest clergy. In simple frankness, the architectural resurrectionism that blights our church plant today is the direct result of profound clerical ignorance of art and architecture, coupled with boundless clerical self-confidence.

Lest the restatement of this plain fact seem presumption in a layman, let me quote a bishop, The Most Reverend Francis C. Kelley, Bishop of the Tulsa, Oklahoma diocese, writing in the *Liturgical Arts Quarterly* for October, 1940: "The fact that a bishop has to examine and approve of architectural plans in his diocese does not make an architect out of him. Gaze on the consequences that have followed the negatives and positives of bishops who were architects only by self-confidence. No wonder we have a liturgical arts movement—we had long needed it. How many are the buildings too costly to replace but too utterly bad to tolerate in silence? Every one of them is a monument to someone's . . . ignorance. The greatest men are those who learn their own limitations. Stubborn men never learn theirs."

The ecclesiastic of any rank cheerfully admits that the laying on of hands has done nothing at all for his knowledge of air conditioning or central heating. He can be brought to see the same of his knowledge of architecture. Help can only come from where the knowledge lies, from the architect or from the well-informed, be he priest or layman.

Many Protestant churches have boards of trained laymen who assist the pastor in secular matters; these men, naturally, form the nucleus of any building committee. It is my experience that this lay participation seldom exists in Roman Catholic churches; and yet such groups could be of inestimable aid to the pastor—certainly the businessmen among them could point to the costliness of reiterating past granite glories. The architect should be prepared with periodicals and slides to show the best contemporary ecclesiastical church architecture throughout the world; he should stimulate the thought that architecturally as well as spiritually the church must be the encounter of eternity and the moment.

Religious leaders should realize that the term "modern" is not synonymous with extremism but that just as the Gothic style was a new form clothing an old function, so modern architecture is today.

The architect is in a position to say one word in this struggle. The word is "no" said with absolute finality. For, if an uninformed clergy is the source from whom the blessings of ersatz Gothic flow, in every case there has been an acquiescent architect to provide a canal where he should have placed a dam. With great travail, architecture has lifted itself from the brutish trades to professional status. Does that status mean anything at all? What do we think of a doctor who substitutes for his honest diagnosis the sweet words he knows his patient is longing to hear? Is the architect of wedding-cake churches really any different?

The architect is indeed an interpreter, the instrument through which his client's dreams are made incarnate. But if those dreams are nightmares, professional honesty requires that they be shown up as such. When the architect has the courage to say "no," more and more ministers of religion will find the courage to say "yes" to his working where he wants naturally to work, in the spirit of the present moment.

A simple device for the long view is the introduction of courses in art and architecture into the curricula of seminaries and theological institutions. If competent instruction was provided—if, for example, instructors were obtained from nearby architectural schools—this delayed action policy could change the face of American church architecture in fifty years. . . .

And one related problem should be touched: church decoration. You cannot destroy the architectural beauty of a good church by embellishing it with cheap artifacts; but you can destroy its effect, for example, by the judicious placement of simpering garish plaster concepts of its great leaders and saints.

Here again, professional help is required and is available. The most competent art advisors, critics, museum directors and their staffs have their offices within blocks of some of the most abominably furnished churches in the world. Eventually, every large congregation, like any good museum, should have an "acquisitions committee" to protect the church from the generosity of donors. The system at Chartres is instructive. Think of the decades through which the St. Sulpice district in Paris has been producing its horrors of devotional art, yet none has ever found its way into the cathedral at Chartres. Why? Because a succession of

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wise ecclesiastics have placed the real authority in the competent and free hands of the Manury family, now in its third generation of architects in residence at Chartres.

The architect has a continuous obligation to the church he has built. He must, at least, make the attempt to guard the purity of his building. The lay-professional board of a church, of which we spoke earlier, can be helpful here. The new pastor's understandable desire for change where no change is needed can devastate a beautifully conceived interior.

In any region of the country are competent artists ready and willing to help the fusion of eternity and the moment in the work of ecclesiastical art. Their names are available from the heads of our architectural schools and from museum directors. Their employment will do much to enhance churches and to echo once more the plain statement of God that His church is for all men, of all times, in all places.

COMMUNICATIONS

"THE CASE OF EZRA POUND"

New York, N.Y.

TO the Editors: The discussions of our times seem to center prominently around matters of freedom and security. The Commonweal has almost invariably been a refreshing influence in its sound and reasoned approach in these matters. Hence it comes as a surprise now to find in its pages so confused an interpretation of events as provided by Sam Hynes' article, "The Case of Ezra Pound" [Dec. 9]. The writer, perhaps emotionally overwhelmed at the tragedy of Ezra Pound, almost literally rides off furiously in all directions to seek a cause for this tragedy. He finds that the government is the culprit and that we have a "national skeleton" in our closet.

This reader is not persuaded by the author's allegation, but is rather dismayed by the illogical inferences, questionable insinuations, and glaring inaccuracies with which the article is replete.

1. "Incarceration" is a word incorrectly used by the author in describing Pound's committal to a mental hospital. Etymologically, technically and colloquially, "incarceration" refers to imprisonment.

2. "Pound in Bedlam" is termed "a reflection . . . of the way in which individual freedom and the common good have come to be seen as antithetical . . . and of the frighteningly dominant role of politics in modern thought and action." This statement implies that the committal was made on the basis of a political decision. Actually it was made according to due process of law on the basis of psychiatric evidence of insanity. The question was one of mental illness, not of politics. To imply otherwise is to call into question a psychiatric diagnosis which is subject to a variety of checks and guarantees, and possibly also—which is a more serious implication—it is to call into question the good faith of Ezra Pound and his legal counsel at whose instance the finding of insanity was made.

3. We are told that "Pound was indicted *in absentia* . . . for treason." Now, we are aware that *trial in absentia* is not permitted in our system of law. This is for the protection of the individual and his rights. Linking *in absentia* with the notion of the indictment seems to imply that there is something odious about this. There is nothing wrong with *indictment in absentia*. As a matter of fact most indictments are made in this fashion.

4. It is stated that Pound "remains touched by treason, but neither legally guilty nor innocent." This is simply not so. The man is *legally* innocent until he is proven guilty according to law.

5. The writer declares that the Pound case "asks questions." Among these questions appears the following: "Does the artist operate under the same restraints which govern the thought and conduct of other men?" Since there is a charge (merely a charge, but, for all that, a charge) against Pound for treason, I would like to ask, at least rhetorically, if Mr. Hynes seriously believes that an artist is such a type of citizen that he is exempt from criminal prosecution for a crime that is very carefully defined in our law, *viz.* the crime of treason, which crime is very clearly delimited from political opposition in all its various shadings. If Mr. Hynes does indeed believe in such a secondary class of citizenship for artists, he and I have reached a very interesting focus of disagreement.

6. Mr. Hynes suggests that a trial of Pound "might at least have clarified" some of the issues raised by the case and "might also have eliminated some of the accusations and antipathies which have appeared since Pound's arrest. . ." In pointing to these advantages of a trial, Mr. Hynes neglects to mention an equally relevant and more important consideration which clearly shows that neither the government nor the law is at fault for the case not going to trial. This has to do with an important principle of our law, *viz.* that a person cannot be tried for a crime if he is insane and unable to understand the charges against him and unable to prepare a defense. This is an eminently humane principle of our legal system. The protection it gives to the human person should not be trifled with even for the sake of—or rather especially for the sake of—clarifying abstract issues or eliminating "antipathies."

May I respectfully submit that the Ezra Pound case is not a "national skeleton" nor is it a *cause célèbre*. There are very real problems today involving the re-

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lationship of freedom and security. It is interesting to be faced by a case which brings fundamental issues into sharp focus. I do not believe that the Ezra Pound case is such a case. It is rather the tragedy of a man gone mad. And there may well be far more madness than treason in the antecedent acts of Ezra Pound which led to his indictment.

(*Rev.*) HARRY J. BYRNE.

FLUORIDATION

Great Neck, N. Y.

TO the Editors: The piece on "Teeth and Politics" in your Dec. 30 issue notes a relationship between political conservatism and opposition to water fluoridation which I also have observed. I have made no careful study of this controversy and so far have no axe to grind pro or con; but a point occurs to me which you may wish to consider.

As a broad question, how far may public agencies prudently be allowed to go in "doing things" to people for their own welfare? We accept the duty of the community to treat its water against bacterial contamination, to assure a supply which will be harmless (even if scarcely potable). We have pretty well established the right of the community to insist on immunization against certain contagious diseases, on the grounds that the encroachment on personal liberty is outweighed by the public good of preventing epidemics. But does not the fluoridation proposal go somewhat farther than these measures? It is not designed merely to restore the harmless condition of natural water, and as far as I know tooth decay is not contagious. It seems to me that water supply fluoridation is, in principle, compulsory medication for a non-communicable condition; and advocacy or opposition might well take cognizance of the principle involved, as well as of particular merits and risks.

It is to this principle that I invite your editorial attention. Under what circumstances is compulsory mass medication justifiable or prudent? And is it conceivable that some advocates of fluoridation are concerned with establishing a principle, as much as in improving children's teeth? For myself, I offer only the opinion that the stopping-place lies considerably this side of proposals I have encountered in "popular science" pieces on population control, promotion of mental health and similar problems.

H. W. NYLUND.

Weston, Conn.

TO the Editors: The Commonweal has long been held in high regard in our house. We have not always agreed with its editorial opinions, but, hitherto, we have never found it difficult to respect them. The two paragraphs headed "Teeth and Politics" [Dec. 30] came as such a shock, therefore, that for a few moments we were speechless. To find The Commonweal being merely silly was, indeed, a blow.

The dispute in question is not, as you suggest, over tooth decay. It is over the question of whether large commercial interests should be permitted to dispose, at a profit, of a highly toxic by-product, for which there is no other large market, by pouring it into the stomachs of the American people, via their drinking-water. To suggest that the people who want to let the manufacturers do this are "progressives," while those who oppose it are reactionaries who also oppose UN and UNESCO is so fantastic that it would be folly to waste words discussing it.

It is impossible to summarize the case against fluoridation in a brief letter. Let it merely be said that very many medical men and dental surgeons of high standing in this country and in Europe are utterly opposed to it. In natural waters, fluorides exist as calcium fluoride. Even this is a cumulative poison, producing effects which show up long after childhood has passed. Disfiguring erosion of tooth enamel is the mildest of these effects and is not much more than a warning sign of more serious internal injury. Yet in those towns in which artificial fluoridation is being practised, the vastly more toxic sodium fluoride is being used—solely because the commercial by-product exists in this form.

In this matter, The Commonweal has tragically allied itself with the foes of righteousness.

LEONARD WICKENDEN.

"THE LESSON OF ANARCHISM"

Chester, Pa.

TO the Editors: Gunnar D. Kumlien's recent attempt to contrive an instructive parallel between the condition of latter-day Anarchism and the present condition of established Stalinism ["The Lesson of Anarchism," Dec. 16] is based on the suppression of certain major distinctions between the two movements, and on a serious misreading of history. His intention seems to be to establish an optimistic thesis in two parts . . . roughly, (1) that the fate of Anarchism is a good case of the mystical exhaustion natural to revolutionary mass-movements, and (2) that recent changes taking place within Communist countries—"independent of changes of temperature in the cold war"—give reason for thinking that a similar exhaustion is affecting Stalinism. I don't suggest that such a thesis is impossible to establish, only that the "comparison" Mr. Kumlien presents in support is radically inadequate for his purpose.

With respect to his intent, Mr. Kumlien neglects to observe that, whatever the merits of the material comparison to follow, it is a comparison of crucially unequal elements, offering somewhat the same difficulties

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as a comparison of the condition of State-endorsed Christianity with the condition of the heretical sect of Manichees, to the end of drawing conclusions as to the prospects of the former from the condition *in extremis* of the latter. Surely such comparisons should be prefaced with reminders of the disparate strengths of the parties compared taken *at zenith,* and of the difficulties introduced by the fact that one party to the comparison controlled State-apparatuses, and the other has not and by its nature *could not.* (Having said this, it is apparent that "exhaustion" is likely to mean different things in each application.)

The above consideration would deeply qualify the results of Mr. Kumlien's comparison *if he had carried it out.* But, very strictly, there is no comparison. In identifying the decadent Anarchism to be compared, he takes as indices the "unwillingness" of young Anarchists "to sacrifice their lives in order to kill super-tyrants like Mussolini and Hitler." He observes that "During the Civil War in Spain they fought bravely against Franco, but *then* (italics added) something seems to have happened." The old Anarchists of Mr. Kumlien's acquaintance are ". . . unable to explain why their ideology has lost its impact and no longer inspires the young to sacrifice their lives for an ideal." He is here identifying the policy of *attentat,* which was condemned and abandoned at about the time of the First World War, with Anarchist activity *between* the Wars, and *during* the Second World War. This identification is plainly an egregious mistake. If Mr. Kumlien is genuinely concerned over the failure of individual Anarchists to attempt political assassinations during the Second World War—having recognized that there would be nothing distinctively anarchist about such attempts—he should (1) mention the favorable "occasions" he has in mind when he says "many indeed were the occasions," and (2) reflect that the Anarchists of Europe, butchered by Falangists and Chekists in Spain, starving in the great open air Hotels maintained by the Third Republic in the Spanish Marches, *immediately* imprisoned (and frequently killed) with the consolidation of Fascist power in both Germany and Italy, were in significantly less favorable circumstances to take advantage of their "occasions" than, say, the average incensed Catholic. (It should be noted in passing that young Anarchists did not stop dying "heroically, with Anarchist slogans on their lips" with the fall of Barcelona: they continued to die in much the same way, as participants in the underground movements of German-occupied Europe, notably in Bulgaria: they *continue* to die in much the same way, resisting the Stalinist regimes of Eastern Europe, the tyrannies of Franco and Batista.)

The "ominous symptoms" which "recall the fate of Anarchism" Mr. Kumlien detects behind the Iron Curtain are the apparent failure(s) of the Communist system to guarantee the zeal of the epigoni. He adduces no other trait for comparison. This is, after all, a fairly commonplace political occurrence, and if held to be important might be illustrated (rigorously) by reference to radical parties *in power* for comparable periods of time. But, because he is so struck with the benevolence of *café*-Anarchism, Mr. Kumlien chooses to compare the zeal or militancy of the Stalinist inheritors with their Anarchist "similars." And of course, to him, Anarchism and Anarchist militancy mean only one thing: *attentat.* Now, even if Anarchist militancy were *not* for him mistakenly so identified, if he had given a correct character to Anarchist "exhaustion," Mr. Kumlien would not thereby have demonstrated any parity between such a (supposed) condition and the condition of Stalinism with which it should be compared, nor any similarity of *causation.*

A. QUATERMAIN.

"A QUESTION OF CONFIDENCE"

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editors: Mr. Donat O'Donnell has recently discussed the French intellectual climate, admittedly a brilliant analysis ["A Question of Confidence," Jan. 6]. I yet find difficulty in accepting the full force of his reasoning; and his proposals for reform I think appalling.

As a rule of thumb, let us say we discover intellectual superiority when another person comes to the same conclusions we do, in a shorter time. Many phenomena discussed by your author are reduced to something other than intelligence when interpreted under this rule. Indeed, the "mimicry of intelligence" discussed by the author is, as a label, often nearer the mark, and may be conveniently fastened to conduct uncongenial to us.

What does Mr. O'Donnell propose? "If the emphasis of French education became less exclusively intellectual . . . [if there were] shorter school hours, institution of school games, less frequent reading, less official adulation of the bright, and no doubt many other changes . . . ." The author is on sure ground when he proposes a better balanced education. I am not sure this is best got by cutting down school and reading time. If the French disability were a result of overdevelopment of the rational powers at the expense of other qualities, the proposed educational reforms might develop more intelligent citizens.

Send the boys to co-educational schools, so they may develop the affective or emotional qualities. Introduce love to France.

Some people, I may conclude, do not agree that the French are distinguished by an intellectual approach to their problems. (See my Rule of Thumb.) But the difficult problem of proper educational reforms I leave to wiser heads than mine.

JOSEPH W. SCHRAM.

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The Universe Rang True When Fairly Tested

SURPRISED BY JOY: The Shape of My Early Life. C. S. Lewis. Harcourt, Brace. $3.50.

By ANNE FREMANTLE

THE author of the best-known Anglican devotional classic since the days of the *Eikon Basilike* and *Holy Living and Dying* gives his readers an autobiography which, he declares, aims primarily at telling the story of his conversion and is neither a general autobiography nor a volume of Confessions. It is also, alas, one of the most terrible indictments ever written of the public school (in the English meaning of the term, i.e., the opposite of the American) system, and a most subtle analysis of the differences between joy, pleasure, delight and happiness. Since St. Augustine's meticulous analysis of what was the light, what the color, what the sound, the smell, the touch, what, indeed, was the good he loved when he loved God, few writers have taken the trouble to distinguish, with such clarity of psychological insight, the nature and the degrees of attraction, the nature and the degrees of satisfaction, apprehended by man.

C. S. Lewis begins his story in an orthodox way: "I was born in the winter of 1898 at Belfast, the son of a solicitor and a clergyman's daughter." He concentrates on his childhood because, he says, "I never read an autobiography in which the parts devoted to the earlier years were not far the most interesting." He and his brother, his elder by three years, had good parents, good food, a good nanny and a garden.

Neither of the parents cared for pictures, for music or for poetry; their mother, a serene Scot, and their father, an emotional and rhetorical Welshman, were both "great readers," but for neither were any aesthetic or religious experiences valid. Nor had either, as their younger son puts it, "listened to the horns of elfland." Mrs. Lewis died of cancer before C. S. was eight, and this death brought the two brothers closer together, but estranged them from their lonely and demanding father, who never remarried.

Mr. Lewis describes the near and far view of the Ulster landscape; the near woods of small trees, the small fields divided by ditches with ragged, sea-nipped hedges on top; the pale etiolated earth, and the far hills, ever-present on the horizon "steep and compact and pointed and toothed and jagged" low and blue, like Bunyan's Delectable Mountains, there generated *Sehnsucht*—longing. This unappeasable longing, punctuated by moments of real Joy, were the first intimations of reality for C. S. Lewis. He relates three experiences: one, the memory of a memory; another, conveyed by the illustrations in *Squirrel Nutkin;* the third resulting from a poem. In all of these he recognized "an unsatisfied desire which is itself more desirable than any other satisfaction."

This, the "enormous bliss" of Milton, which Lewis calls Joy, was almost obliterated by what must be the three most infernal schools ever endured by small boys. At the first, small and English (it is interesting how *Irish* this Ulster Protestant felt himself as a child; much, one supposes, as the Pilgrims felt themselves American) the headmaster beat the boys daily and hard, and taught nothing but geometry; at the second, which was Irish, there was no attempt at discipline, but only bullying and violence on a grand scale. But the third (or rather, fourth, for there was a harmless English prep-school thrown in for two years, where Mr. Lewis lost his faith, but where no physical harm befell him), Wyvern College, was the worst.

The only thing that mattered at Wyvern was to do the right thing; the small boys fagged for the Bloods, and when their turn came, fagged their juniors. What C. S. Lewis felt, all the time, was simply boredom and fatigue: "I was dog tired, cab-horse tired, tired (almost) like a child in a factory." Still, today, he remembers the horror of waking daily to a ceaseless round of being kicked, mocked, fagged, flogged and humiliated, with no alternatives but games. His reaction was to become a Prig, and this, he maintains, is what the public schools produce: a bitter, truculent, skeptical, cynical intelligentsia of prigs.

It is heartbreaking that the wounds remain, that now, happy in his don's life, happy in his Christian faith, C. S. Lewis is so maimed he still must show his scars. For "Bloodery" was part of the English *ethos* only during the century—little more—in which Britain ruled the waves. It was an attempt to produce enough supermen to run three-quarters of the world; any race that feels it must rule others has to have some such form of training for its youth: the Spartans did, the Nazis, too, and only those who have been through West Point can say whether, on reading this book, it raises no echoes.

What saved C. S. Lewis was the library: there was always a way out, into the Eddas, into Roncesvalles, into Asgard and Tir-ha-Oge. And when released to tutor in Surrey with "the Great Knock" (what a great man!) C. S. Lewis grew into the kindly scholar he was meant to be, with just enough adolescent atheism (which was pure selfishness: "can't you see I don't want to be interrupted? Please do not disturb"), and lechery left to serve as dark contrast to the sunlight that constantly threatened to flood his whole being. As a schoolboy, he had turned from God to seek states of mind, which he tried to produce by "Maistry." Now he was seeking Joy again, but destroying it instantly by his own introspection: "my greedy impatience to snare it frightened it away." But he learned what was to save him from "many popular confusions," that Joy is not a disguise of sexual desire. Pleasure was one thing, but "Joy is not a substitute for sex; sex is very often a substitute for Joy." Nor

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was the "ravenous desire to break the bounds, to tear the curtain, to be in the secret," Joy: the magic solution" was just as irrelevant to Joy as the erotic conclusion had been." The Flesh, then, and the Devil, proved themselves fakes, and C. S. Lewis comments, "What I like about experience is that it is such an honest thing . . . The universe rings true wherever you fairly test it."

And then, one afternoon, he bought a copy of *Phantastes*, by George MacDonald, and found therein "the name of the new quality, the bright shadow" that rested on the tale. "It was Holiness."

There was much to follow: Oxford, two years of the nightmare of trenches of World War I, a wound, and then Oxford once again, before "checkmate." And checkmate began when Mr. Lewis realized that all images and sensations were "merely the mental track left by Joy—not the wave, but the wave's imprint on the sand." "All images and sensations . . . if idolatrously mistaken for Joy . . . said . . . It is not I. I am only a reminder. Look, look! 'What do I remind you of?' "

What is surprising is that C. S. Lewis should have been assigned, with his purely aesthetic, romantic mind, to teach philosophy: he must have confounded his students as completely as he found himself. He is delightful describing the dangers that beset a young atheist who wishes to set his own house in order. When Mr. Lewis examined himself he found "what appalled me; a zoo of lusts, a bedlam of ambitions, a nursery of fears, a harem of fondled hatreds. My name was legion." And the full horror of the situation was his growing awareness of Who was hounding him. Man's search for God, indeed, he grumbles ruefully. "To me, as I then was, . . . you might as well have talked about the mouse's search for the cat."

One result of his conversion is that Joy has lost nearly all interest "for me since I became a Christian . . . the old stab, the old bittersweet" comes still as often and as sharply, but it is only a signpost, and "we would be at Jerusalem."

This is an almost agonizingly personal book: it is the conversion of a pure romantic, and is as completely convincing as are the conversion stories of Augustine and Newman. It is dedicated to a pupil, Dom Bede Griffiths, whose own conversion, told in *The Golden String*, owed much to this tutor, C. S. Lewis. How wonderfully literate these presentments of Englishry are! Let us hope there will be many, many more.

Timeless World

AMRITA. By R. Prawer Jhabvala. Norton. $3.50.

By DORIS GRUMBACH

"IT is a delightful thing, indeed, to have a daughter well married." Jane Austen's Mrs. Bennet, in the fullness of her pleasure at having settled one of her girls into prosperous Hertfordshire society, could be thus complacent in her 1815 drawing room. Out of the same maternal anguish-and-delight, Mrs. Radha Chakravarty pursues a modern version of Mrs. Bennet's course. Her daughter Amrita is convoyed into the safe harbor of a good marriage in this most charming first novel. Rarely in fiction has a comedy of manners so well captured an older tempo and the pace of a stately tradition by the use of contemporary materials.

Mrs. Jhabvala, Polish wife of a Hindu architect, has succeeded in suggesting the nineteenth century's unimpassioned prose in telling her story of love on two levels of Indian society. She has the virtue of seeing a strongly striated society in its entirety, and she writes joyfully of the antics of the members of each stratum reaching up or down or across to preserve or advance their views of themselves in society.

Amrita is a B.A., her mother proudly tells everyone, a handsome, shy, loving, and unintellectual girl who works as a radio announcer and loves Hari Sahni deeply. Hari is a handsome, shy, emotionally obliging fellow who wants only to please everyone impartially. Fortu-

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nately for Amrita's ambitious mother, Hari's family makes a marriage for him—a marriage to lush, lower-class Sushila, and the irony runs deep as it turns out to be far more satisfactory to both hero and heroine than the self-determined alliance they had devised for themselves. Amrita is consoled by a marriage which her mother engineers, with an "English-returned" Bengali professor. Love, decided along class lines—as Elizabeth Bennet's and Mr. Darcy's was in another time and another place—triumphs, and the families, their fears of change and difference permanently allayed, live happily for the time being.

Mrs. Jhabvala's charm is ineluctable, whether she is describing wedding feasts, or naming-day feasts, or a ride through the streets of Delhi, or the rooms in the house of the Indian *nouveau riche*. She has a full stock, in Langston Hughes' wonderful phrase, of the sweet flypaper of life, and to it sticks all the wry, gay, ironic and foolish things of social existence anywhere, anytime, in this world.

Paradox of the Good-Bad Writer

THE LIFE OF RUDYARD KIPLING. By C. E. Carrington. Doubleday. $5.50.

By JAMES FINN

RUDYARD KIPLING stands like a stumbling block in the way of many students of the nineteenth century, readers and critics, and many people would prefer to avoid him than to deal with him. Long out of critical favor, he has never been sufficiently "dead" to be profitably resurrected. Even Edmund Wilson's penetrating and fascinating essay on Kipling and T. S. Eliot's edition of Kipling's verse aroused only a flurry of interest.

Yet Rudyard Kipling swept to high and youthful popularity in the 1890's and continued to write for forty more years. And, despite his detractors, he has had a constant subterranean popularity that has resulted for years in a steady sale of his books in relatively expensive editions.

He has also had notable defenders. W. Somerset Maugham, an indifferent critic but a craftsman who knows his way about in the short story, has said that "Rudyard Kipling is the only writer of short stories England has produced who can stand comparison with Guy de Maupassant and Chekov. He is our greatest story writer. I can't believe he will ever be equalled. I am sure he can never be excelled." But Kipling continues to arouse strongly ambivalent feelings in many critical readers who seem repelled less by his work than by the fact that it continues to attract them even after they have pronounced it slight or meretricious.

For both hostile and friendly critics of Kipling, George Orwell's advice is pertinent: "Kipling *is* a jingo imperialist, he *is* morally insensitive and aesthetically disgusting. It is better to start by admitting that, and then to try to find out why it is that he survives while the refined people who have sniggered at

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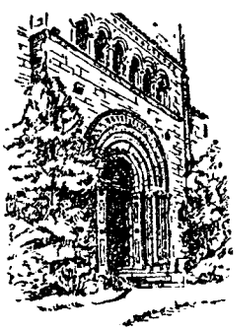

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him seem to wear so badly." Mr. Carrington would not agree with this judgment but in this definitive biography he attempts to show, through an historical account and a critical examination of the man and his works, why Kipling survives.

Mr. Carrington gives the details of those crises in Kipling's life which Mr. Wilson examined so fruitfully. Before he was yet six years of age, Rudyard was separated from his parents and given to the care of guardians, "Uncle Harry" and "Aunt Rose." Under five years of this tutelage, he learned lessons which were never to forsake him; he developed the twin virtues of stoicism and silence. The episode marked his life as surely as Dickens' adventure in Warren's blacking-factory marked his, and found its way as surely into his fiction. We are given a full account of the debacle of Kipling's suit against his brother-in-law. Kipling's silence was destroyed, his stoicism threatened and he fled Vermont.

The full description which Mr. Carrington offers of these and other crises in Kipling's life, as well as his account of the pleasant interludes, allows us to appreciate the man, and they shed some light on his works. And they make us realize the unlikely combination of circumstances that allowed a person like Kipling to have a sure command of his particular subject matter. For he knew the English soldier, and the natives and land of colonial possessions as no contemporary writer did. He will always have historical value, for he expressed clearly the view of nineteenth century imperialists with a sense of responsibility.

Mr. Carrington is less successful in his examination of Kipling's works. He often states favorable judgments without convincing the reader that they are or can be justified. There is something about Kipling's work, particularly his verses and his later short stories, that has eluded better critics than his present biographer. And it is probably not Mr. Carrington's fault that until Kipling's work is more surely sifted he will often be quoted without acknowledgment or recognition, or that he will be known as the author of catch phrases, sentimental jingles and such poems as the sententious "If," that he will remain—to adapt Orwell's phrase—an inspired monument to the obvious.

REVIEWERS

Anne Fremantle, author and anthologist, contributes frequently to American reviews. She is a contributing editor to The Commonweal.

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James Finn is an associate editor of The Commonweal.

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